

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 24, 2006

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We write to urge you to bring H.R. 5392 to the floor tomorrow to provide an extension of disaster unemployment benefits for survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It is essential that the House take action on this bipartisan bill before departing for the Memorial Day recess tomorrow, since benefits will begin expiring next week while Congress is adjourned.

When we passed an extension thirteen weeks ago, we estimated that approximately 165,000 individuals would benefit. Today, fewer than half that number are still out of work – proving both the need for extending the disaster benefits and refuting the argument that extending jobless benefits are a disincentive to finding work. Furthermore, the average benefit is only \$104 per week, not enough for a family to pay housing and other living expenses.

Last time, working together, we were able to enact a thirteen-week extension. We request that we again proceed on a bipartisan basis to show our nation's commitment to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina and Rita by passing H.R. 5392 before we adjourn tomorrow. We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic Leader



James L. Oberstar
Ranking Member
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee



Charlie Melancon
Member of Congress